1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

According to the caste composition of the villages and existing social bonds between them, people belonging to one particular caste will have their own *panchayat* for a group of villages. Thus in the case of some castes ten to twenty villages have their own caste *panchayat*, while in the case of others thirty to forty villages together have a common council of this type. In some cases endogamous sub-castes have their own *panchayats*; but in many others the wider caste group comprising many sub-castes has a composite council of its own. Caste headmen representing each constituent village are the members of this council—although in actual practice other wealthy and influential, as well as vocal and assertive, persons also gradually come to occupy a seat in it. Serious breaches of the norms and traditions of the caste, as well as important intra-caste disputes, are heard and decided by these caste *panchayats*. Cases of divorce, failure in fulfilling agreements made before finalizing marriage arrangements, serious sexual lapses, and of breaches of the social norms of the caste, such as incest, breaches of the rules of endogamy and exogamy, eating forbidden food and pursuing a 'lower' occupation, etc., would be under the jurisdiction of such a caste *panchayat*. But it must be pointed out that there is no clear-cut distinction between the powers and functions of the caste *panchayat* and the village *panchayat*. For example, when a serious case of incest comes to their notice both these *panchayats* take action independently. Similarly, if a person belonging to one of the Hindu castes kills a cow or is found to have eaten beef, simultaneous action is likely to be taken by both the *panchayats*. In general, however, it can be laid down that matters of a primarily local interest are brought to the village *panchayat*, while those having a bearing on specific caste customs fall under the jurisdiction of the caste *panchayat*. A large number of marginal disputes may be heard by either, and often the local tradition defines their respective jurisdictions. As the *panchayat* in Shamirpet is sufficiently aggressive it has arrogated to itself a considerably wide range of powers.

While all villages and nearly all castes have their own *panchayats*, inter-village *panchayats* are formed from time to time when they are demanded by a special situation. They function as *ad hoc* arbitration committees. Conflicts between two villages, or between two parties belonging to different villages (and not drawn from one particular caste), often necessitate an inter-village

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623 692 *panchayat*. In this the elders of the two villages which are parties to the dispute as well as the elders from an agreed number of villages from the neighbourhood sit together, hear the dispute and give their verdict. Of course, they have no authority to enforce their decision, and these days such cases often go to the courts of law established by the government.

1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

earlier in this chapter, suggests that an extrovert and sensitive people who cannot conceal their approval or disapproval and who do not suppress their immediate reactions cannot have a very peaceful and quiet life. Indeed most of the tensions are short-lived, but quarrels and conflicts are numerous and frequent. As the community is partially autonomous in several spheres of life, it is necessary for it to have an effective mechanism for the control of these conflicts.

Shamirpet, however, is only partially autonomous, for it is a part of a wider social system. The extent of caste organization is regional, and covers a very large number of villages. In several spheres of life it is the caste rather than the village that has the upper hand in controlling the behaviour of its constituents. Details of ritual connected with the life-cycle, and observance of the *mores* and norms of the caste fall in this category. Further the village is but a small unit in the national political structure of a sub-continent. Its laws are made by the State Legislature and the Union Parliament; and the law-enforcing arm of the State extends to it as effectively as it does to the rest of the country. This brings the State police and magistracy on the scene. All important breaches of law go to the civil and criminal courts. What remains of the autonomy of the village appears quite insignificant, but in actual practice relatively few cases go to caste councils, fewer to courts of law, and left to itself to control the inter-group and inter-personal relations of its members the machinery responsible for social control and justice within the village finds itself burdened with considerable work.

How is this mechanism set in motion? How does it work? Presently I shall give a few illustrative cases which will reveal the process in certain typical situations. At this stage it is necessary to point out that all cases of conflict do not go to the village council. In many cases the parties to the dispute boisterously quarrel over the issue and there the matter ends. For a few days they probably will not be on speaking terms, leave each other out of social functions and ceremonies, and continue to indulge in mutual recriminations and behind-the-back slander; but in course of time normal relations will be resumed. In other cases mediation or arbitration of the elders may be sought or may be volunteered by the elders themselves. When influential village elders notice disorderly or unbecoming behaviour on the part of someone

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578 repeatedly they intervene, and seek to set things right by the
627 pressure of their personality. They ridicule, admonish and threaten the wrongdoer, and leave it at that. This intervention is often effective and succeeds in achieving the desired result. Disputes may be specially referred to influential and impartial elders, and thus a settlement is sought without the necessity of having to appear
692 before the village council. When these efforts fail, or when the
674 seriousness of the offence or dispute warrants it, it is taken to the headman or to one of the elders with a specific request that it be decided by the village council. On the other hand, elders may take cognizance of a serious matter and may themselves bring it to the notice of the village council. Of course all cases of murder, serious theft, and grievous bodily injury, as well as of default in payment of substantial loans are taken to the criminal and civil courts. Abduction and adultery can be referred to law courts; but generally they are taken either to the village council or to the caste council. Misconduct with a married or unmarried woman, running away with a married woman, default in fulfilling the terms and conditions of a marriage contract may similarly be referred to either or both the caste council and the village council. Of the two, whichever happens to be more powerful and effective attracts most of these marginal cases to itself. Personal disputes, minor property and land disputes, sex offences and conflicts arising out of breach of contract generally come up for hearing and decision before the village council.

695 The composition of the village council has been described earlier.[1] When cases come up for hearing before it, the proceedings are carried on with considerable dignity. Available evidence and eye-witnesses are examined. The motive for the offence, and the situation in which it was committed—particularly its immediate cause, as well as presence or absence of provocation—are also taken into account. Outwardly an attitude of objectivity and impartiality is maintained by everyone; although in reality the rival factions within the council try to tip the scale their own way, so that the evidence may later be construed in such a way that it may prove advantageous to the client to whom they have already promised their support. At the time of actual decision the parties to the dispute have to withdraw, allowing the council freedom to discuss and analyse the issues involved. Divergent and often contrary opinions may be expressed by the rival factions at this stage.

1 [cf. at 116, pp. 45-6, --ANALYST]

1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

But when the decision is announced, it is done so in a manner that indicates unanimity among the members. Besides attempting arbitration and mediation, the village council also administers punishment when a person's guilt is proved. The nature of punishment itself differs in different categories of cases, also on the basis of persons involved in the dispute. It ranges from a simple warning to a complete social boycott; the intermediate stages being stern admonition, firm demand for apology, compensation to the aggrieved, and fining.

Absence of internal unity within the council has undermined its authority considerably. The fact that some of its members allow and encourage their protégés to defy—fully or partially—its decisions, contributes further to its growing weakness. Dissatisfied with its judgement one can always take the case to a regular court of law where the decision of the council may be reversed.

With these preliminary observations we can now proceed to examine a few illustrative cases which represent typical situations met with in the life of the community:

(1) V. R. R. and his brother B. live together. Their parents are dead, and being minor B. lives with his elder brother. V. R. R. has had elementary education. Being married into a respectable lower middle-class family in the city, and himself with some experience of urban life, V. R. R. regards himself as the leader of a band of city-influenced youth. As most of his time is spent in loafing, planning mischief, gambling, drinking and instigating people to quarrel, he cannot devote much time to the land, and consequently the financial position of the family is not satisfactory. V. R. R. adds to his income by extorting money from the villagers by offering his advice, help and support—often for unjust causes—but this money is spent almost wholly on himself. B. is now an adolescent, and is fast approaching a marriageable age. Noticing his elder brother's indifference towards him, B. approached some of the elders of his caste. His main complaints were: (*a*) V. R. R. does not spend his (B.'s) share of the land and its produce on him. (*b*) Nothing is being saved for his marriage. One day V. R. R. lost his temper over some trifling issue and scolded his younger brother. B. ran to E. D. R.—an influential man in the village, and the hereditary leader of his caste. Fearing that B. might be beaten by his elder brother, E. D. R. accompanied him to his house and asked V. R. R. to come out of the house and listen to

The Village Panchayat Courts were for a group of villages with powers to try cases upto Rs. 200/- without legal practitioners. The Court Members were elected by all adult residents in the village. The number of members varied from 5 to 12 and each member held office for 3 years. 692

Forest Panchayats were elected by the cattle-owners of the village and then the Panchayat elected its President. The Forest Panchayats were allowed to levy fees for grazing and fuel collection, and then they were vested with certain statutory powers. They were under the control of the Revenue Department. 311

Besides these, there were Irrigation Panchayats elected by all landholders of the village who got water from the sluice. These were under the control of the Revenue Dapartment. 312

Then there were the Village Panchayat Schools. Each village with a population of 500 or more could, on application, have a grant of Rs. 180/- for a school-teacher and an initial grant of Rs. 80/- to start a school in the Panchayat area. There were about 800 Panchayat Schools in Madras by about 1928. 871

Last, but not the least, was the jurisdiction of the Panchayat in its present constitutional set up. The Statute in force did not allow the Village Panchayats any control over the Panchayat Court or Irrigation Panchayat or Forest Panchayat, wherever they existed, though Panchayat Schools alone were entrusted to Village Panchayats wherever they existed. These are discussed in latter sections of this chapter. 642

B. Finance: (Table No. 19)

Local Fund Cess: This was the main source of income to Panchayats in Madras as everywhere else. It was usually 1/6th of the total local fund cess of the Local Boards, soon after the abolition of the Taluk Boards in 1934, it was increased to 1/5th of the District Board Cess. But, the grant of the local fund cess to Panchayats was not based on any rational principle of local finance. In fact, the proportion, each Panchayat got, bore no relation to population, prosperity, poverty or administrative requirements. While a Panchayat situated in an irrigated area got local fund cess as its share, in proportion to the larger land revenue collected from the village. Panchayats existing in the dry areas got positively less local fund cess, in view of the lesser land revenue collected therein. 651

26: Rao E-5 (1946-7) 1964 AWI India Telugu AWI7

[p 189]

Section III: Village Courts and Panchayat Courts.

PART I.

Administrative and Legislative Position at the Time of the Survey

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Administration of justice by trial by Panchayats was one of the salient features of the Indian Polity from times immemorial. The intimate knowledge of local officers, men and matters possessed by the village elders enabled them to decide the disputes brought before them in a fair and dispassionate way. The local influence and prestige of the village elders and consideration of social ex-communication and popular disapprobation of their acts acted as a strong deterrent to the offenders who could be won over to the right path. This system being cheap, efficient, expeditious and effective, continued to be in force for centuries. The structure of the village community and its internal organization remained unaffected for long despite the drastic political and economic upheavals that affected sweeping changes in the history of the country. There is ample historic evidence to bear testimony to this fact. Inspite of the political interregnum created especially in South India after the fall of the Moghul Empire in the 18th century and the anarchy that prevailed in several parts, the village communities continued to work uninterrupted. Sir Thomas Munroe, who worked in the Ceded Districts left very vivid description of the working of the Judicial Panchayats towards the beginning of the 19th century. The village officers in Madras like the Munsif and the Karnam were very influencial leaders of the community and very often they were the dispensers of justice. The later British rule tried to perpetuate this system in spite of its efforts towards centralisation. A committee that was presided over by Sir Thomas Munroe towards 1816, centralised the power of civil and criminial jurisdiction in the hands of the local hereditary village officials in Madras. Later legislation in Madras in this connection also followed the same lines. The Madras Village Courts Act of 1888, later amended in 1919 and 1936, had laid down the procedure for the administration of justice by Village Courts and Panchyat Courts. According to this Act, the Provincial Government brought all the Village Courts under the control of the Village Munsifs. He was the judge of the Village Court and sometimes the President of the Panchayat Court, if there was one established in the locality.

692 **A. Structure:** The Provincial Government by notification in the Gazette was empowered to establish a Village Court for a group of two or more villages in lieu of the several Courts previously existing therein or a new Village Court for any specified area. In villages where there were no Panchayat Courts, village Munsif was to be appointed by the Collector. The District Collector had a right to suspend or remove a village Munsif or a member of a Panchayat Court for incapacity, neglet of work, misconduct or other just and sufficient cause and was to do so on a requisition passed by the District Judge for the cause appearing in the judicial proceedings of a Village Court. (Sections 6, 7 and 8 of the Madras Village Court Act, 1887). For every order of suspension or removal an appeal might be made within 3 months to the Board of Revenue if the order was passed by the Collector without the orders of the District Judge or to the High Court. The decision of the Board of Revenue or the High Court should be final.

The Provincial Government was to constitute a Panchayat Court for a village or group of villages and therefore no Court of a village Munsif should exercise jurisdiction in any such area. For every Panchayat Court, the Collector was to determine the number of members, but they should not be less than 5 and more than 12. The members were to be appointed by election and out of them, one shall be elected as a President and another as a Vice-President to preside over the deliberations and if both were absent, the Panchayat Court might elect one of the remaining members to be the President for the time being. The term of membership was for 3 years. In addition to the usual members, the Collector might also appoint at his discretion not more than 2 members from the Minority Communities, for example, Muslims, Indian Christians or Backward Classes in the area. The presence of 3 members during any sitting constituted the quorum. All the Civil and Criminal suits in the area were transferred to the Village or Panchayat Court established therein. The village Munsif should keep a register of all suits referred to the Viliage Court and should write the proceedings of the Court. The village Karnam should assist him in this work if required. The village servants were usually employed in serving summons, potices

and orders and for seizing, selling and delivering movable properties under this Act. 692

B. Finance: The income of the Village and Panchayat Courts mainly consisted of the fees charged for the process, for the execution of decrees and for the supply of copies of decrees and other records. The village officers like the Munsif and the Karnam and the other village servants were hereditary with fixed pay and incomes. The members of the Panchayat Court were all honorary and as such the establishment expenses were practically nil. This was the main advantage of the administration of justice by the Village Courts and Panchayats Courts. As no legal practitioners were essential to appear either in civil or criminal proceedings, the parties were saved from the expenses of litigation, while they were enabled to have effective and early justice. 692 651

C. Functions: The Village Courts and the Panchayat Courts had both Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction. 692

Civil Jurisdiction: The civil suits admissible before these Courts were for claims not exceeding Rs. 50 or upto Rs. 200 with the written consent of both the parties. The President or members should not decide cases to which they were parties. Cases which were once tried by another Court of competent jurisdiction were not to be entertained and claims which were once judiciously reduced could not be raised again. After serving the summons on the parties by the village servants, cases were fixed for hearing and if the defendant failed to appear, the Court was competent to give an exparte decree. Legal practitioners were allowed to appear on behalf of any parties. Witnesses were summoned to give evidence, if they were within 5 miles distance and if the distance was more, the Munsif of the other village was intimated to take interrogation of the witness and to send it. Women who according to the custom could not be called in public or if they were sick, were heard at home. After hearing the parties and recording evidence, the Village or Panchayat Court was to arrive at just and fair judgement. 695

Criminal Jurisdiction: The Provincial Government might by a notification in the Gazette empower a Panchayat Court to try all or 692

692 [686] any of the following offences—offences punishable under Sections 160, 277, 289, 290, 323, 334, 352, 358, 379, 426, 504 and 510 of the Indian Penal Code and offences punishable under Section 3 Clause (9), 11, 12 of the Town Nuisance Act of 1889, etc. If a Panchayat Court found an accused person guilty of an offence under Section 510 of the Indian Penal Code, it was empowered to impose a fine not exceeding ks. 10 and a fine not exceeding Rs. 15 in respect of any other offence. The District Magistrate or the sub-divisional Magistrate was empowered to set aside conviction in appeal on the ground of corruption, partiality, misconduct, gross miscarriage of justice on the part of the Village or Panchayat Court.

D. Supervision and Control: The civil work of the Village and Panchayat Courts was supervised by District Musif, Sub-Judge or District Judge within whose jurisdiction they functioned and the criminal work was supervised by the Magistrates' Courts. The control over the Village and Panchayat Courts was in the hands of the District Collector.

It was unfortunately not possible for us to have a very satisfactory sample for enquiry of the Village and Panchayat Courts due to the lack of early sympathatic Government cooperation for a long time. As such the survey was conditioned by various difficulties and limitations.

PART II

Actual Conditions as Revealed by the Survey

Panchayat Courts were in every district and there were both good and bad specimens. There were Panchayat Courts in major as well as in minor Panchayats and the size of the Panchayat had no bearing on the efficiency of the Panchayat Court.

Samples of good, unsatisfactory and indifferent Panchayat Courts had been chosen for inquiry, from each of the districts surveyed, as shown in the table on the next page.

Table showing the Constitution of Sample Panchayat Courts.

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No.	Name of the Village	District	Date of Creation	Number of Members	Jurisdiction C–Civil Cr–Criminal Powers
1	Valluru	East Godavari	1900	V. M.	C
2	Razole	do	...	V. M.	C
3	Avidi	do	1922	7	C
4	Kothapeta	do	1920	8	C
5	Bodasakurru	do	1920	10	C & Cr.
6	Bhimavaram	West Godavari	1934	11	C & Cr.
7	Tanuku	do	...	...	...
8	Ganapavaram	do	1920	9	C & Cr.
9	Undi	do	do	10	do
10	Pennada	do	do	9	do
11	Veeravaram	do	do	9	do
12	Kandavilli	do	do	5	do
13	Narsapur	do	do	...	do
14	Parvatipuram	Vizagapatam	do	10	do
15	Sringavarapukota	do	do	9	do
16	Kothavalasa	do	1926	9	do
17	Chodavaram	do	1920	13	do
18	Vadada	do	1935	8	do
19	Yellamanchili	do	1930	10	do
20	Pedana	Kistna	...	...	do
21	Vuyyuru	do	1926	10	do
22	Nuzvid	do	1920	7	do
23	Jaggayapeta	do	1920	9	do
24	Gooty	Anantpur	1916	10	do
25	Dharmavaram	do	1920	10	do
26	Penu Konda	do	1920	...	do
27	Brahmanayeleru	do	1937	5	do
28	Bukkapatnam	do	1923	9	do
29	Kadiri	do	...	10	do
30	Gorantala	do	1908	5	do
31	Lepakshi	do	1900	5	do
32	Dhone	Kurnool	...	...	do
33	Betamcherla	do	1910	...	do
34	Pattikonda	do	1908	7	do
35	Maddikera	do	...	...	do
36	Nandikotkur	do	...	7	do
37	Gudur	do	...	12	do
38	Veldurti	do	...	...	do
39	Rayadrug	Bellary	...	11	do
40	Kampli	do	...	...	do

V. M.—stands for Village Munsif Court.

692 A. **Structure**: Every district had a number of Panchayat Courts in it, and in all of them, fair representation was given to all the communities like Brahmins, Kapus, Kammas, Baljas, Telagas, Harijans, [666] etc. The method of election in all the Panchayats selected was by show of hands only.

[661] B. **Finance**: Court fees were the only source of income at their disposal.

C. **Functions**: The working day, the place of work, the time and procedure of these Courts differed from one another from district to district. Again most of them had both civil and criminal powers.

The Panchayat Courts in the East and West Godavaris were known for their efficient and impartial working. Ganapavaram Panchayat Court in West Godavari had both civil and criminal jurisdiction. Working hours were from 11 a. m. to 5 p. m. In Pennada both civil and criminal powers were bestowed, but since 1930 criminal powers were taken away. As there was no place for holding the Panchayat Court, it was being held in the President's house. Similarly in Sringavarapukota, which started in 1920, there was always heavy work. In places like Bhimavaram and Veeravaram the Panchayat Courts were found to be efficient.

In East Godavari, the Panchayat Courts in Valluru, Kapileswarapuram, and Palivela, not to speak of those in major Panchayats like Razole and Amalapuram, were working quite well. In Kistna District, Panchayat Courts in Jaggayapeta, Nuzvid and Vuyyuru were found to be working well. They had representation from all communities, good record of work from 1927, and created good impression on the public. In Vizagapatam not many efficient Panchayat Courts were found except in a few instances like Kothavalasa, where the same President was continuing for the last 20 years. He was also the President of the Village Panchayat. There was no fixed day allotted for the decision of the cases. The Court usually met, whenever there was work, in the house of the President.

Kurnool District was notorious for its village factions and it was confirmed in our investigation. In Nandikotkur, the majority of cases were only criminal. The civil work was far too low every year. About 200 criminal cases came up for the decision as those of illicit cattle grazing, felling fuel, etc. Some of the specimens of the most unsatisfactory type of working were Dhone, Maddikera and Betamcherla where the election for the Panchayat Courts were held 3 years back, but the President was not elected at all. This of

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course was a situation by no means confined to Kurnool District alone. In the Circars, Guntur and Kistna Districts had several Panchayat Courts with the same experience of not electing the President even long after elections of the members of the Panchayat Courts were over. In Dharmavaram, Gorantala and Lepakshi in Anantapur, Panchayat Courts were not able to function due to the same difficulty. In some places the village Munsifs happened to be the President of the Panchayat Courts in which case they sent the village servants to issue summons to the parties.

The jurisdiction of the Panchayat Court was usually upto Rs. 50 and Rs. 200 with the mutual consent of both the parties.

There were no special or independent buildings to the Panchayat Courts in the majority of cases. Hence they were either held in the Village Chavadi or the house of the Panchayat Court President. The working day differed from Court to Court according to the convenience of the members. The decision of the Panchayat Courts were usually accepted. There were no appeals against their decisions except to the High Court and hence the tendency for appeals was practically less.

D. Supervision and Control: The supervision by the revenue and civil authorities seemed to be hopelessly inadequate. They did not even publish the complete results of the election or the names of the members elected for a long time in the Government Gazette and did not take steps to elect the President even after the Court was elected. This was the experience of several Panchayat Courts like Pulletikurru in East Godavari, Yelamanchili and Pedapalli in Vizagapatam, and Dharmavaram in Anantapur to quote only a few instances.

PART III

Observations

The Panchayat Court as an independent entity similar to the Village Panchayat had served a useful purpose and its powers were not notoriously abused everywhere. Its representative character had always been its strong feature and the mature and wise decisions, given without the aid of lawyers, proved beneficial to the villagers. Elections were always peaceful and mostly by show of hands.

The inadequate supervision of their work by the civil and criminal Courts, scarcity of peons at their disposal to serve summons

692 on the parties and the paucity of funds to meet contingencies were some of the defects.

It would be a matter for consideration, whether it is after all necessary to keep the Panchayat Courts as they are to-day separately without making a particular Committee of the Panchayat responsible for administration of justice, by bestowing civil or criminal or both powers, whenever any Panchayat is deemed fit to exercise them. This would also enable to minimise the number of institutions governing village life and may bring all the facets of public life within the control of a single body.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Telugu AWI7

796 from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150, largely spent on drink. The priests of the goddess are low caste people, chiefly the washerman caste. They get new cloths as presents. The whole celebration is barbarous and repulsive.

The village administration.—There is no panchayat in the village.
624 The village officers consist of a karnam, a munsif, and three servants. The karnam keeps the village accounts, while the munsif collects the revenue and attends to small criminal cases. The munsif does not generally care to try civil cases even within his province; they all go to the District Munsif's court.

364 Nobody attends to the village sanitation, though the munsif is expected to do so. The villagers too do not care to help him in his work. The Sanitary Inspector comes once in a year, and quietly goes away with satisfactory remarks from the easy chair in his note book. He being the one officer for two or three taluks, cannot pay much attention to one taluk in particular; besides he also has engineering work.

625 The police station is seven miles away. When crimes of extraordinary nature take place, the munsif reports the same to the police, who come and conduct enquiries. Most of the crimes are hushed up. Police enquiry is a sham. So is the night patrolling, which is the duty of the village servants.

692 The munsif is expected to hear petty crimes; but many cases that might have been decided here go to the Magistrate's court.
696 Many crimes have been left undetected, and the criminals unpunished, crimes which were horrible and plainly proved. As locally interpreted, the effect of the Evidence Act is such as to render the most proved case null and void for "want of proper evidence." When a murderer once escapes easily from punishment, another is at once encouraged. All the villagers know that it is these considerations that encouraged a man engaged in litigation to murder another who was about to give evidence against him. That case went unpunished. Such is the case with most murders. In fact, most men engaged in important litigation are afraid for their
674 lives in this village. In three years there have been four murders in the neighbourhood of the village, two killed in connection with litigation and two in connection with robbery from the person.

691 There is much litigation. About 45 cases are filed every year. Of these twenty to twenty-five will be for non-clearance of debts, and fifteen to twenty for land disputes. The villagers do not seem to show any hesitation or fear in resorting to the courts. The half educated Brahman in the village, acting as an agent for a vakil, with no other profession, tries to earn his livelihood by creating enmity and disputes among ignorant families and dragging them to the courts. Thus several families which were once considered very rich have been ruined. One family of Komatis, for example, with a property of about Rs. 20,000, was sued by some relations for a partition of the estate. The Vaisya refused all compromise in the earlier courts, pursued the case at enormous expense through the three courts, till he finally lost the whole estate in the High Court. In the end, the family of twelve children, with not an inch of land for support, and no means of liquidating the debts contracted for the court expenses, have sold their big house and gone away to the Agency tracts as beggars to fill their bellies. There are many families in the village similarly ruined.